

Warrant Article Questionnaire Non-Standard Town Agency Articles

Article #15	Date Form Completed: 8/31/2021
Article Title: Establish and Authorize Revolving Fund for Community Gardens	
Sponsor Name: Town Administrator	Email: jwmartin@natickma.org
With support from Jillian Wilson Martin (Sustainability) and Susan Ramsey (Community Services)	

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it will appear in the Finance Committee Recommendation Book and presented to Town Meeting for action.
Response	See attached Motion
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is the proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the accompanying Motion?
Response	<p>To establish a new Community Gardens Revolving Fund, thereby creating a sustainable source of funding for the annual maintenance and enhancement of the Town’s growing portfolio of community gardens.</p> <p>Funds received would include plot fees from current and future community gardens; funds expended would focus on annual operations and maintenance, including the costs of a part-time Community Garden Coordinator. (Note, this position is currently funded by a grant.)</p>
3	Has this article or one of a very similar scope and substance been on a previous Warrant Article and what have been the actions taken by the Finance Committee, other Boards or Committees and Town Meeting?
Response	The Town has several Revolving Funds as listed in the Town of Natick’s General By-laws (https://www.natickma.gov/1526/Article-41A---Revolving-Funds). The proposed Community Gardens Revolving Fund would operate in the same manner.
4	Why is it required for the Town of Natick and for the Town Agency sponsor(s)?
Response	The Town of Natick’s portfolio of community gardens is growing and requires greater operational oversight, maintenance and planning. Since opening its first community garden at JJ

Warrant Article Questionnaire Non-Standard Town Agency Articles

	<p>Lane in 2014, two additional gardens have opened (at Hartford St and Navy Yard) and a fourth garden is under construction at the Natick Housing Authority's property at 72 South Main St.</p> <p>In FY22, the Town expects to rent approximately 130 community garden plots to residents at fees ranging from \$30 (for subsidized plots) to \$100 (for larger, full price plots). In total, these rentals are expected to produce approximately \$9,500 in revenue.</p> <p>The Town seeks to use this revenue to pay for standard annual maintenance (e.g., pest control, replacement of boards in raised beds) and, beginning in FY23, the cost of staffing the program with a Community Garden Coordinator* (approximately 12.5 hours per week over a 20 week growing season).</p> <p>Unfortunately, the proposed revolving fund is not expected to generate enough revenue to fully cover larger capital expenses related to the community gardens (e.g., entire bed replacements, stone dust path replacements, etc.). Town Meeting should expect to see these larger requests included in the Town's capital plan.</p> <p><i>*Note, the Community Garden Coordinator position already exists and is listed on the Part-Time Pay Plan. The proposed motion does not seek to create a new position.</i></p>
5	Does this article require funding, how much, from what source of funds and under whose authority will the appropriation be managed and spent?
Response	<p>It does not require new funding, but seeks to create a revolving fund.</p> <p>The revolving fund would be managed by the Senior Center and Community Services Director, with supervision by the Town Administrator.</p>
6	<p>Does this article act in any way in concert with, in support of, or to extend any prior action of Natick Town Meeting, Massachusetts General Laws or CMR's or other such legislation or actions?</p> <p>Does this article seek to amend, rescind or otherwise change any prior action of Natick Town Meeting?</p>
Response	It follows prior action taken by Town Meeting with regards to other revolving funds and would be done so in accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 53E1/2.

Warrant Article Questionnaire Non-Standard Town Agency Articles

7	How does the proposed motion (and implementation) fit with the relevant Town Bylaws, financial and capital plan, comprehensive Master Plan, and community values as well as relevant state laws and regulations?
Response	Per above, it follows best practice for funding program costs directly from program fees, and aligns with Article 41A – Revolving Funds .
8	Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion?
Response	The Senior Center and Community Services Director, in collaboration with the Town Administrator.
9	<p>What steps and communication has the sponsor attempted to assure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interested parties were notified in a timely way and had a chance to participate in the process ● Appropriate Town Boards & Committees were consulted ● Required public hearings were held
Response	This warrant article was initially discussed internally by Town staff. It was separately also requested by community gardeners with plots at JJ Lane.
10	Since submitting the article have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	None.
11	If this Warrant Article is not approved by Town Meeting what are the consequences to the Town and to the sponsor(s)? Please be specific on both financial and other consequences?

Warrant Article Questionnaire
Non-Standard Town Agency Articles

Response	The Town will need to increase its operating budget to support the annual operation and maintenance of community gardens.